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MCCARTHY*

Closer Liaison Between The CIA And Congress

Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, a consistent advocate of congressional supervision of programs and budgets of the central intelligence agency, has made a new proposal on the matter.

He has asked the senate to set up a nine-man select committee on foreign intelligence "to make a full and complete investigation and study of the central intelligence agency" and report its findings by the end of next year. Previously he urged without success the establishment of a joint senate-house watchdog committee to deal with the CIA, much as the joint atomic energy committee operates in that sector of secret government operations.

Similar proposals were recommended by the Hoover commission in 1955, but were never acted upon.

"The CIA," says Senator McCarthy, "although it is engaged in worldwide activities of vital importance to the United States, is not subject to either the direct or indirect controls applied to other agencies of the government by congress. . . . The CIA expends a large budget without accounting to congress and even keeps the number of its employees secret."

In view of widespread criticism of CIA activities in the abortive Cuban invasion and in Vietnam, there is considerable justification for members of congress wanting to know more about the agency's operations. A great deal of secrecy is undoubtedly necessary, but it would seem that selected members of the house and senate could be given more insight into the general policies that guide the CIA programs.